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CLEAN VERSION OF AMENDMENTS

Amend claims 19, 27, 30, 34-37 and add new claims 38-39 as follows:

19. (amended) A dry microorganism culture which comprises at least one microorganism species in carrier-bound form, wherein the culture is present in the form of particles which

a) have a particle size of at least about 0.1 mm and

b) comprise from about 10^{10} to 10^{12} cfu/g of at least one microorganism species; and

c) are compressed.

27. (amended) A process for producing a dry microorganism culture, comprising at least one microorganism species in carrier-bound form, which comprises

a) dissolving or suspending at least one substance suitable for forming a carrier in a liquid comprising at least one microorganism species,

b) drying the resultant mixture in a spray-dryer, for the spray-drying use being made of a conditioned dried gas having a dew point of less than about +5°C, heated to a temperature in the range of above about 80°C, and

c) removing the dried material from the spray dryer, this dried material having an exit temperature of from about 45 to 75°C.

30. (amended) Dry compressed microorganism culture according to claim ~~19~~, obtained from a powder concentrate of microorganism culture dried in a spray-dryer, for

38

B3 cont'd

the spray-drying use being made of a conditioned dried gas having a dew point of less than about +5°C , heated to a temperature in the range of above about 80°C.

16 ~~34~~. (amended) A process as claimed in claim ~~31~~ 13, wherein the spray-drying is performed in a spray-dryer in which a conditioned dried gas is employed having a dew point of less than about +5°C , heated to a temperature in the range of above about 80°C.

B4

17 ~~35~~. (amended) A starter culture for foodstuffs and feedstuffs comprising a microorganism culture as claimed in claim ~~19~~ 1, or prepared by a process for producing a dry microorganism culture, comprising at least one microorganism species in carrier-bound form, which comprises

a) dissolving or suspending at least one substance suitable for forming a carrier in a liquid comprising at least one microorganism species,

b) drying the resultant mixture in a spray-dryer, for the spray-drying use being made of a conditioned dried gas having a dew point of less than about +5°C, heated to a temperature in the range of above about 80°C, and

c) removing the dried material from the spray dryer, this dried material having an exit temperature of from about 45 to 75°C.

18 ~~36~~. (amended) A foodstuff or feedstuff obtainable by using a microorganism culture as claimed in claim ~~19~~ 1 or prepared by a process for producing a dry microorganism culture, comprising at least one microorganism species in carrier-bound form, which comprises

39

a) dissolving or suspending at least one substance suitable for forming a carrier in a liquid comprising at least one microorganism species,

b) drying the resultant mixture in a spray-dryer, for the spray-dryer use being made of a conditioned dried gas having a dew point of less than about +5°C, heated to a temperature in the range of above about 80°C, and

c) removing the dried material from the spray-dryer, this dried material having an exit temperature of from about 45 to 75°C.

37. (amended) A process as claimed in claim ~~33~~ 15, wherein the spray-drying is performed in a spray-dryer employing a conditioned dried gas having a dew point of less than about +5°C, heated to a temperature in the range of above about 80°C.

38. (New) A powder concentrate of a microorganism culture comprising from about 4×10^{11} to 10^{12} cfu/g of at least one microorganism species.

39. (New) The powder concentrate of claim 38 having a water activity a_w of less than 0.4.

40